

THE ISLES WAITING FOR THE LAW.

1502
5665
1855
S-2

A SERMON,

Preached at East Granville, June 20th, 1855, at the Ordination of Mr.
Bela N. Seymour, Missionary to the Marquesas Islands.

BY REV. E. DAVIS, OF WESTFIELD.

TOGETHER WITH

THE CHARGE, BY DR. COOLEY; AND RIGHT HAND OF FEL-
LOWSHIP, BY REV. C. J. HINSDALE.

(Published by Request.)



SPRINGFIELD:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BOWLES & COMPANY.
1855.

THE ISLES WAITING FOR THE LAW.

A SERMON,



Preached at East Granville, June 20th, 1855, at the Ordination of Mr.
Bela N. Seymour, Missionary to the Marquesas Islands.

BY REV. E. DAVIS, OF WESTFIELD.

TOGETHER WITH

THE CHARGE, BY DR. COOLEY; AND RIGHT HAND OF FEL-
LOWSHIP, BY REV. C. J. HINSDALE.

(Published by Request.)



SPRINGFIELD:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BOWLES & COMPANY.
1855.

SERMON.

Isaiah 42, iv. And the isles shall wait for his law.

THE prophecy contained in this chapter was addressed primarily to the captive Jews in Babylon. The general object of it was to induce them to repose confidence in God, and to expect deliverance from bondage. In doing this, the prophet used language that was applicable to *their* state, but at the same time more applicable to the wants of a world lying in wickedness. He promised to send a deliverer, and while he seems to describe Cyrus, who was their deliverer, he uses language that is more applicable to the Messiah, who would come and free those that should follow him from spiritual bondage. It was more truly the Messiah than Cyrus, who would not strive nor cry, who would not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed. It was the Messiah for whose law the isles should wait.

To wait for his law is to wait for a knowledge of the way of salvation, which his gospel proclaims. It means that the inhabitants of the Islands of the sea would wait to receive the law, or the gospel that is preached in his name.

Their waiting for it implies, that they shall be in a state to receive it, and profit by it before it shall be made known to them.

I remark, 1st, that this prediction has been, and is being literally fulfilled. When the first Missionaries of the American Board arrived at the Sandwich Islands, it was found the people were waiting for the law. They had become dissatisfied with their system of idolatry, had cast away their idols, were without even a god of wood or stone, in which they trusted, and were ready to receive the law of Christ. It has, in other cases, been true, that the people to whom missionaries have been sent, had been convinced of the folly of idol-worship, and were in a state of preparedness to receive the gospel.

The recent call for missionaries to go and preach the gospel at the Marquesas Islands, is another remarkable fulfilment of the prediction in the text. By the wonder-working providence of God, the people of

those islands, without the aid of a missionary, have become satisfied that there is something better than cannibalism and exterminating wars. They are in a posture to receive instruction; their old religion sits loosely upon them; their attachment to it is not strong. The reigning chief, or princess of those islands, with her husband, an adopted son of America,* came to our shores to find a missionary. After much delay and embarrassment, they have found one, who was born and educated on the hills of Granville. While we are here assembled to set him apart to the work of the gospel ministry, and to commission him in the name of the Great Head of the church to preach the everlasting gospel to the inhabitants of those islands, it requires no great stretch of imagination to suppose they are impatiently waiting for his coming. They wait for the return of their chief, we may suppose, with much impatience, and anxiously inquire of every ship-master who enters their harbor, if in their wanderings they have seen their chief. Even now the isles wait for the law of Christ.

I remark, 2d, that the providence of God in preparing the way for the introduction of a missionary into the Marquesas Islands, is very wonderful, and worthy of being recorded. The people of those islands have been regarded till within a few years as cannibals, as devourers of human flesh, and on that account have been shunned by civilized men. Ships pursuing their voyage in that part of the Pacific Ocean, have passed by them as they would ports where the plague was known to be raging. About sixteen years ago, a boat containing eight men, while pursuing a whale, was carried to a returnless distance from the ship, and those on board of it were obliged, as a last resort, to direct their course to those islands, which they reached in safety. The providence of God directed them thither, but the number was too great for Him who chooses to work through feeble instruments, that no flesh may glory in his presence. He favored the escape of seven, who succeeded in getting on board a ship that passed near the islands, after they had been there eight months. The eighth† was unable to escape. The chief took him to his house and bade him remain. Despairing of ever being able to escape, he resolved to undertake the great work of reforming them in some respects, for the purpose of making his residence among them more comfortable.

Who does not see in the resolution of a young sailor, who was then less than 20 years old, with no peculiar qualification for such a work, the hand of God? How often have seamen been wrecked, and left on

* Mr. Robert Mills was born in the North part of Ireland; his parents were Presbyterians. He came to this country when 12 or 14 years old, and resided in Schoharie Co., N. Y. When about 17 or 18 years old, he went out from New Bedford in a whaling vessel to the Pacific.

† Mr. Mills.

the islands of the sea, but who, before, ever heard of any one, except Adams, who was cast upon Pitcairn's Island, that attempted to reform the people? How common it is for seamen to sink down to the common level of a degraded people, and how uncommon for any of them to attempt to raise the people from the mire in which they wallow.

Having succeeded in inducing them to forsake some of their wicked practices, and having induced ships passing that way to anchor in their harbor and trade with the natives, having improved their temporal condition, and having become the husband of the only child of the chief, and she having become the chief of the islands at the death of her father, he resolved to go in pursuit of a missionary. In company with his wife, he visited the Society, Navigators' and other Islands, but not accomplishing their object, they came to America in November last. After making inquiries for four months for a missionary without success, their wants were made known to one, whom God, we believe, had been preparing and training for his service in foreign lands. Who does not see in all this the hand of God? In a marvellous manner he has prepared the inhabitants of those islands to receive the gospel, has made it safe for a missionary family to reside there, and has inclined the chief, at a great expense of time and money, to go in search of a religious teacher. He has selected one of the sons of this church to engage in this work. When we ponder this subject in our minds, and consider what God hath wrought, we must believe he has much people in those islands, whom he intends to save, and that this mission will be prosperous.

I remark, 3d, the text and the occasion remind us that we have been negligent of our duty to the heathen world. More than 1800 years ago, the Savior commanded his disciples to preach the gospel to every creature. Such was the zeal and earnestness of the primitive disciples, that in a few years the gospel was proclaimed in all parts of the known world. A century after the ascension of Christ, Justin Martyn said, "There is not a nation, either Greek or barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wander in tribes and live in tents, amongst whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father, in the name of the crucified Jesus." If the same earnestness in obeying the command of Christ had continued to animate the church, we should not now have occasion to say, that more than half the population of the globe know not the only living and true God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. But so it is. The church very soon lost its missionary spirit; darkness settled down upon the nations, and gross darkness covered the people. Their love to the Savior waxed cold, and they neglected to *keep* the gospel preached to every creature. Idolatry again prevailed, till some of the tribes of man discovered that their God's were vanity and a lie. It is very plain that

we, who have the gospel committed to our care with a special command to publish it, have been neglectful of our duty. While we have been slumbering, or but partially awake, while we have been doing something, but not all we could, the cry of the perishing has come to us from afar, saying, "come over and help us." We have responded feebly to these calls from time to time; not so heartily as we ought, and now, instead of calling to us from a distance, they have sent messengers to our shores, who have come and knocked at our doors, and have besought us to send our sons to preach to them the everlasting gospel. They beseech us to pity them in their ignorance, and not to send them empty away. Instead of publishing the gospel early on all the Islands of the sea, we have obliged them to wait for it, to wait till they become weary. The fact that "the isles wait for the law," reminds us that we have not been doing our whole duty in times past. We ought to have had more of the spirit of Christ, and to have followed him with the earnestness of the primitive disciples.

I remark, 4th, that while the isles wait for the law, we are not to suppose they know definitely what it is. They have heard there is, in some parts of the world, a better religion than theirs, that the nations that receive it are richer and more powerful than they are, that their temporal condition is improved by it, and that it makes men nobler and happier. This they believe, though in the seamen that touch at their shores they have by no means the best specimens of Christian civilization. They have no idea of spiritual religion, of the nature of sin, or of what it is to be a Christian in reality. When they shall learn what Christianity is, when they shall see in the mirror of God's truth their own hearts, and be urged to forsake all and follow Christ, their opposition to it will no doubt be eschewed. Then it will be seen that they have by nature the same carnal minds that are found elsewhere. We are not to be discouraged nor disappointed, if those who say "come over and help us," shall refuse to attend to the things that belong to their peace. They wait for the law but know not its nature nor its power. We know that it is mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin. It is not the letter of the gospel, nor the men who preach it, nor those that defray the expense of sending them out, nor all these combined that can civilize and christianize a degraded people; the Holy Spirit must give efficiency and success to the means used. What cannot the spirit of God do through a very feeble instrumentality? Let us not think we have done our whole duty by sending one to publish the glad tidings of salvation to the waiting isles. We must follow the missionary with our prayers; we must beseech God to send the spirit all-powerful from above to convince of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. Seeing as we do, the hand of

God in the opening of this new field, and hearing him say to us, "go up and take possession of the land in the name of the Lord," it would seem that we can pray in faith, nothing doubting for the success of the gospel in the Marquesas Islands. God has taught us as plainly as his providence can teach, that he has much people there, whom he intends to bring out of darkness into marvellous light. Let us then pray for the success of this mission with an unwavering belief, that God is more ready to work mightily in the hearts of that people than we are to ask it.

I remark, 5th, that neither Islands nor continents now shrouded in darkness would wait long for the rising of the sun of righteousness, if all our churches were as earnest to obey the last command of Christ as were the primitive disciples. In the language of another, I would say, "the earnest christian is one who is ardently incited and strongly determined about the things of godliness. There is force in his character, and life and fire. He is not sluggish nor indolent, but is impelled by the energies of a wakeful mind. He stands firmly by his principles and battles dauntlessly for God and for truth." How earnest was he who came to seek and save lost men. His life was one of unceasing and untiring activity. It was his meat and drink to do his Father's will and finish his work. This same earnest spirit fired the souls of the apostles and primitive christians. They went everywhere preaching the word, unmoved by the perils of sea or land, by want or opposition. They had some sense of the value of the soul. Full of an earnest spirit and of the Holy Ghost, they were abundant in their labors, and God crowned their efforts with astonishing success. We should have the same earnest spirit, and if we had it, the Isles would not be obliged to wait long for the law.

I would say, in conclusion, that since the cause of missions is the cause of God, those who devote themselves to this work with earnestness, have nothing to fear. He who hears the Macedonian cry uttered by those groping in darkness, and with a spirit of christian benevolence leaves his country—his home, cheerfully submitting to hardships and privations, to preach the gospel to the destitute, has nothing to fear. It is a work to which God calls him, and one which he approves. The Lord is the helper of all those who engage in missionary work with a desire to do good.

Our young brother, who is now to be set apart to the work of the gospel ministry, may say, "the Lord is my helper and my shield." "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear."

"How are thy servants blessed, O Lord!

How sure is their defence;

Eternal wisdom is their guide,

Their help omnipotence.

In foreign realms and lands remote,
 Supported by thy care,
 Through burning climes they pass unhurt,
 And breathe in tainted air.

When by the dreadful tempest borne
 High on the broken wave,
 They know thou art not slow to hear
 Nor impotent to save."

Go then, my brother, in the strength of Him, whose grace is sufficient for thee, and when your labors on earth are finished we shall meet again before the throne of God, and sing the everlasting song.



The following hymn was written for the occasion by Mrs. Sigourney :

FAREWELL TO THE YOUNG MISSIONARY.

Land of my birth ! I may not say
 How deep within my heart you dwell,
 Friends of my youth ! I dare not stay
 The ardor of my love to tell.

Blest Church ! beneath whose hallowed dome,
 First to my Savior's side I drew,—
 Green trees that shade my peaceful home,
 Parents and dearest ones,—Adieu.

Oh ! when the dead, both small and great
 Shall stand before the Judge's seat,
 When sea and sky and earthly state,
 All like a baseless vision fleet,

The hope that then some heathen eye
 Thro' me an Angel's glance may raise,
 Aids me to vanquish Nature's tie,
 And turn these parting tears to praise.

CHARGE TO THE MISSIONARY,

BY

TIMOTHY M. COOLEY,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN GRANVILLE.

REV. AND BELOVED YOUNG BROTHER :

THIS is such a day as you have never before seen. You have indeed seen *other days* worthy of memorable notice. Such was the day (Oct. 25, 1829) when, in parental faithfulness, you was brought within these sacred walls, in your unconscious infancy, and baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Such, too, was the memorable *day*, when, in answer to parental cries and agonies, you was baptized by the Holy Ghost, in a saving and effectual change of heart. And then again, *that* was a most memorable day, when after due self-examination, you, in the bloom and freshness of youth, (Sept. 6, 1846,) gave yourself up to God, in solemn covenant, with this church, and at the same time, sealed your engagements to be the Lord's, with the elements of Christ's body and blood.

These days of special religious interest you will reflect upon, often both here and hereafter.

But *this day*, this *passing hour*, stands pre-eminent above all others. You have now entered the portals of the christian ministry. You are invested with an office, the highest that can be conferred on mortal man. You have been set apart as a minister and ambassador of Christ, by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery.

We therefore exhort you, Brother, to make full proof of your ministry. I charge you before God, and the Lord Jesus, who shall Judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine.

The minister of Christ must not only be a good man, but " his personal holiness must be eminent above that of common christians, and answer-

ing to that of angels." Though we should stand by the gate of heaven and light the friends of the Redeemer to their heavenly Rest, without the reality of true piety in our own hearts, our lamps would go out in darkness. Take heed, therefore, to yourself, that you possess the spirit of that Gospel which you inculcate on others. Be Christ-like everywhere, and in everything. Maintain unceasing communion with God. It was this that gave to David Brainard his wonderful influence with the Indian savages, at the Forks of the Delaware. The eye affects the heart. Before they could understand his sermons, they could read his heavenly example. When a clan of savages saw the great Stoddard at a distance, and agreed together to fire upon him, as he drew near and they knew him, instantly they were hushed, and said one to another, "No! No!! He is the white man's God!" He passed on unharmed. Whether with the civilized or with barbarians, nothing is comparable in influence to a Heavenly example. It is therefore the summary of duty to every ambassador of Christ,

"To point to brighter worlds, and lead the way."

Your field of labor is not here amidst these bowers of Zion, surrounded by christian example, and strengthened by christian counsellors. In the absence of these helps, in seasons of trial and perplexity, what can you do? Where will you look for help? In the darkest and deepest adversity there is always a throne of grace—look there for comfort and guidance, "call upon me in a day of trouble and I will deliver you, and thou shalt glorify me."

The command and the promise to the first band of missionaries, stands unrepealed. "Go ye unto all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," this is the command: "and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,"—such is the promise annexed.

On this solemn hour, it becomes you to review the past, and look forward to the future. You have been a child of Providence, and I trust you have been a child of grace. As your affectionate pastor, my eye has been upon you ever since these hands baptized you with the sacramental water. I have watched for your welfare in your Sabbath school and Bible-class instruction. In your educational course, it has given me grateful satisfaction to aid you by preliminary instruction, and to watch over you in your whole course. And it gives me pleasure to bear testimony that amidst the trials and temptations of youth; as far as I know, there has been no single act to pain my heart, or to cast the slightest shade over your christian profession. While you have seen sins enough in your heart and life to damn a million souls, you have also seen how Providence has guarded you from many evils, and imparted to you every needful blessing. Especially has the Savior's hand been conspicuous in selecting you as his ambassador to the "Isles of the sea." As far as human

foresight can decide, the way seems plainly marked out for you, soon to bid a *last Farewell* to your father's house, the delightful home of your youth—to your Pastor and all your christian friends—to the companions of your youth—and to your happy country. And you leave us sorrowing most of all, under the painful probability that *we shall see your face no more!*

For a short season, your associates will be those

“ Whose march is on the mountain wave,
Whose home is on the deep.”

Fail not to do them good as you have opportunity, by counsel, example and prayer. A few weeks will carry you to your destined home. And how different, I must remark, are your prospects from those of our early missionaries! With them the question hung long in doubtful suspense, whether they could set foot on Pagan shores. How long was the spirit of Gurdon Hall, our noble pioneer in foreign missions, tried, even to agony, on this very subject? Lyman and Monson fell as martyrs, in a Barbarian land.

The vision of the future to your eye must be full of hope and expectation. The royal strangers will go with you and introduce you to their countrymen. They will be your reliable friends in all trials. Ancient prophesy is now fulfilling—“ The isles shall wait for his law.”

In your future missionary life, questions of deepest interest must be solved. The Bible must be given to the natives in a language intelligible to them. And whether you must educate the nation in the English tongue, or reduce theirs to a written orthography, may be a difficult question.

Let me say, however, in a word, in every question of painful difficulty, let the dying words of the great Edwards be your directory—“ Trust in the Lord and you need not fear.”

Whether your missionary life will be measured by many anniversaries or whether you will come to a youthful grave, is uncertain and immaterial; only let this be the inscription on your tombstone, *Though dead he yet speaketh*. Let every missionary day, and missionary sermon carry to your Judge a good report, and a short life will be long and *blessed!*

Attempt great things. Expect great things. If you are instrumental of but one conversion, on the Marquesas Islands, consider the prize you will win. You will save a soul from death. Angels will rejoice at his conversion. Angels will carry him at death into Abraham's bosom. The Savior will acknowledge and acquit him at the day of judgment. Follow that Marquesan convert, onward as endless ages roll on, and his joys are new and increasing forever. If the whole amount of toil and treasure of all American missions should result in the conversion of one benighted soul to God, the reward would be beyond calculation, rich and glorious.

I have been myself a missionary. Fifty-two years ago I left my young family—my church and people, and labored one-third of a year in a vast field of Home Missions, between the head of the Delaware and Lake Ontario, mostly a desert. It was often impressed upon me, that if instrumental in *one conversion*, I would not return home with a heavy heart. So it was ordered, fifty-two years ago this very day, I attended three religious services in a barn, for there was no church in the range of one hundred miles. By invitation, I spent the night with the physician of the place. God was pleased to open the heart of his wife, like that of Lydia, to receive the word. In one year wanting ten days, she made a journey of between two and three hundred miles, and in this house publicly professed the Savior's name, and presented her two children in baptism to God. Long ere this, she has gone home to her rest. To God be all the glory given.

Dear young Brother, take courage in God alone. Be faithful unto death. And now, son! if I had a patriarchial blessing to give, gladly would I impart it to you. But I have not. My prayer, I trust, will be, the LORD bless thee and help thee. The LORD cause his face to shine upon thee. The LORD lift upon thee the light of his countenance, and give thee peace. AMEN.

THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY REV. C. J. HINSDALE.

DEAR BROTHER:

THE ecclesiastical council here assembled, have, with satisfaction, found the way entirely prepared to proceed in the solemn transactions which have now been witnessed. The act by which you have been introduced into the ministry, involves consequences which no human mind can measure, which take hold on the soul and its eternal destiny. But though solemn, it is an occasion which affords pure and exalted satisfaction, inasmuch as another is added to the company of those who preach the gospel of peace: a satisfaction which is heightened by the occurrence of this event, at a time when there is a painful disproportion between the number of those entering the ministry and the necessities of the church and the world. Another circumstance, which gives special interest to the occasion, must not be overlooked; that they have set apart one to the ministerial work, who, by that very act, is devoted to laboring among a people who are sitting in the region and shadow of death.

By the part which they have performed, they feel that they have laid upon you an immense responsibility; that they have introduced you to that which, by way of eminence, is called a work: that which will demand an earnest and vigorous application of whatever nature has bestowed, or has been acquired by years of patient study, impelled and directed by eminent piety and aid derived from above. This you have learnt from the impressive charge which has been given you from one, whose long experience in the ministry has well qualified him for the service.

They are also persuaded that peculiar trials await you in the work to which you are looking forward. For not in this land of the Puritans, highly enriched and blessed by science and religion, and endeared by the ties of blood and friendship, do you propose to exercise your office. Nor yet in the thinly settled and destitute regions of our widely extended

land. But far from friends, home and country, your eyes are turned to the isles of the great ocean on the other side of the globe. You go to the self-denying toils of endeavoring to raise a people to the privileges and blessings which you will have left behind. But we are fully persuaded that these suggestions are not new to you ; that you have thought and prayed much over the subject : and that in full view of these and other trials you have counted the cost and made up your mind. Your face is set to glorify God and do good to your fellow men in this department of ministerial labor.

As an expression of their confidence in your qualifications for the work to which you have been sacredly set apart, and welcome to their fellowship in the labors and rewards of the ministerial office, the Council have authorized me to tender to you this right hand. Accept it also as a token of my personal regard and best wishes that God would vouchsafe to you his presence to guide and sustain you, and make you eminently useful in the missionary field. For long residence in an adjoining town, and frequent interchanges with him, your venerated pastor, from early years, who now, on the verge of a far advanced life, is permitted, among his last ministerial acts, to charge you, has made me familiar with much of your history.

We have listened with great interest to the history of those events which have prepared the isles, to whose spiritual benefit you have consecrated yourself, to wait for God's law. His hand has been made bare in this matter ; and in coming to your determination, we believe you have obeyed a manifest call of providence. He inclined the messenger to cross a continent and sail through two oceans to seek a man of God to break to his adopted countrymen the bread of life. And he inclined you to respond to the call.

We say, therefore, go forth to the field which providence has marked out, and to which your own convictions of duty call you. Go, labor to enlighten the benighted, to elevate the debased, to purify the corrupt, and to light up peace and joy in the troubled breast, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. And while thus engaged in a far distant country, do not harbor the idea that you will be forgotten. We, who have taken part in these ordination services, will remember you. The brethren and sisters of this church, among whom you had your birth, and with whom your friends and kindred are numbered, will not forget you.

You will not as formerly be almost cut off from intercourse with the world. The present age is distinguished by an astonishing increase in the facilities of intercourse. Time and space have almost vanished before steam and telegraph ; and the most distant parts of the earth have become familiar with each other. You will share in the benefits of this

progress. If you are called to severe trials we shall quickly know them, and look to Him for his interposition, whose supporting and sanctifying grace can overrule them for your highest good. If your labors are followed with success we shall soon be cheered with the intelligence, and render thanks to Him from whom the blessing has come.

Again we say, go forth to the chosen scene of your labors, putting confidence in the Almighty's arm. For as we cannot doubt that you will follow his leadings, you have a right to expect from his promises that he will be with and bless you. Though you will have peculiar trials, he will grant you peculiar rewards. No sacrifice made out of love to Him and for his cause, is left without its appropriate return. In the enterprise in which you are engaged there is a reward even in making the attempt. To go from christian to heathen lands, to give the gospel to those who have it not, must be attended with a satisfaction that cannot be felt in gathering in the harvest where another has sown the seed. And may you have the higher reward of actual success. May many, through your instrumentality, enlightened and redeemed from their gross corruptions, and brought to experience the grace of the gospel, rise up and call you blessed.

